

**Rhode Island Department of Health
Women's Health Advisory Committee
Draft Meeting Minutes – January 9, 2008**

Members Present: Marie Ghazal, Melanie Duhamel, Yvonne Freeman, Catherine Graziano, Margaret Koch, Christine Ryan, Katie Albert, Iris Tong, Cynthia Rosengard, Danielle Denis, Marlene McCarthy, Lisa Shea, Janet Searles, Marian Mehegan, Carrie Bridges

Members Excused Absent: Kristina Diamond, Kate McCarthy-Barnett, Jessica Marfeo

Members Unexcused Absent: Wendy Fox, Janae Ashley, Chasity Hernandez, Maureen Phipps, Lisa Jones

Welcome & Introductions

Iris Tong called the meeting to order at approximately 3:10. Welcome and introductions were conducted.

Approval of Minutes (December 5, 2007)

Marie Ghazal reviewed the December 5, 2007 minutes. Minutes were accepted with one correction: Under announcements, the dates of Best Beginnings Conference by

Women & Infants' Hospital are March 13 & 14, 2007.

WHAC Procedures/Protocols

In response to concerns raised by members over an outside group

being given access to members' contact information, WHAC members agreed that communications via email or postal mail should only be sent from the WHAC Chairs, HEALTH staff person, or other WHAC members. Members' contact information should not be distributed to people not on the Advisory Committee.

Project Updates

The Department of Health Board of Pharmacy met on December 20, 2007 and reviewed the letter submitted to it by the WHAC, as well as information provided by other members and guests of the Board. The Board of Pharmacy thought the issue of refusal to dispense emergency contraception was an issue of professionalism/professional conduct, which is within their purview to address. The Board of Pharmacy planned to establish a sub-committee to review the issue and prepare a response. The Board of Pharmacy is expected to prepare a response to the WHAC letter.

The WHAC decided not to respond as a Committee to the December 5, 2007 letter from RI Right to Life. Individual members can respond if they wish, since the letter was sent to individual members of the WHAC. Dr. Gifford did respond to RI Right to Life on behalf of HEALTH, acknowledging receipt of the letter.

New Projects

See attached table.

Teen Ambassador Projects

Each teen ambassador is expected to complete a project by the end of June 2008. Ambassadors project ideas are listed below.

Katie Albert: (1) the environment and it's impact on the health of women, especially its impact on breast cancer OR (2) healthy eating for adolescent women with special attention to how vegetarians can eat nutritiously. Katie will select one of these two options and a mentor on the WHAC will be identified.

Melanie Duhamel: Self-defense and how to be aware of your surroundings, especially for young women preparing to enter college/university. Include information about assault and violence against women, as well as common scenarios/occurrences of assault.

Danielle Denis volunteered to be Melanie's WHAC mentor.

Jessica Marfeo (submitted by email): (1) Have a mass at my church (St. Francis of Assisi in Warwick) for a woman/teen shelter. (Shelter in mind is SStar birth RI, in Cranston). I could do this through my confirmation class! Every ccd student will also be participating. Now each person that comes to the mass will bring a personal care or baby item for the shelter, or make a donation. This also can be mentioned in the bulletin in the church and in my former school (St. Francis of Assisi) weekly newsletter to the parents, letting them know about it and even asking if they could drop off items in the school for the drive, if they can't make it to the mass. OR (2) Tag day where every student pays 2 dollars to dress in their own clothes could instead bring in a personal care item for the teen/woman center in

Cranston (listed above).

Regional Report

Marian Mehegan delivered the report from the DHHS Region I Office. The regional office may have additional funds to support OEH projects. Also, Marian needs to have a conference call regarding the Women's Health conference in May 2008.

Staff Report

Carrie Bridges reported that the Division of Community, Family Health & Equity at the Department of Health convened a meeting for all programs that address women's health to discuss how to organizationally link the programs and how to promote a common agenda. The Office of Women's Health was offered as a unit to provide that organization. Relevant programs will meet again to continue this discussion and devise a plan.

WHAC members are encouraged to participate in a public awareness and action campaign around health disparities that will be introduced through the screening of the documentary "Unnatural Causes: Is inequality making us sick?" to be aired in late March/early April on PBS and screened around the state. To learn more about the documentary, please visit www.unnaturalcauses.org. More information about HEALTH's plans and opportunities to participate will be forthcoming.

Announcements

No announcements.

Proposed 2008 WHAC Projects

Proposed Project Role of WHAC/OMH Issues/Factors Existing Activity and/or Potential Partners

- 1. Education of adolescents, families, and providers on the risks of being involved with adult men Define and investigate the problem · Provider/patient confidentiality and trust· Childhood sexual abuse · Attorney General's Office had/has a program for high schools on this topic· Day One· Women's Center of RI· Injury Prevention Program· School-aged and Adolescent Health Program· Family Planning Program· School Nurse Teachers**
- 2. Advocate for funding for OWH WHAC sends letter to Dr. Gifford requesting funding support for the OWH. List prior accomplishments of the OWH and projects to be initiated. · WHAC members can contact their representatives to encourage state funding for OWH**
- 3. Implementation of the Perry-Sullivan Bill Letter to Dr. Gifford indicating the WHAC's support of the bill and offering supportive testimony from WHAC members · Has Dr. Gifford already taken a stand on this? If so, what is his position? · Senior Fact Book released being released in January 2008 by SAC (Senior Agenda ____).· Need**

to determine who else is working on this- DEA, SAC, Governor's Long-term Care coordinating Council?

4. Sexual Abuse Increase awareness about prevalence of sexual abuse in RI and nationally · Sex workers· Sex trafficking· Effects of sexual trauma on refugees· Relevant legislation in RI · Adverse Childhood Experience Survey (CDC & Kaiser Permanente)

5. Women 65+ who do not get an annual mammogram Statewide campaign in partnership with senior centers and others to encourage women 65+ to get annual mammogram · Medicare covers a mammogram only once every two years

6. Incarcerated women 50-64 y/o may not be getting breast and cervical cancer screening · What are the breast and cervical cancer screening rates among incarcerated women 50-64 y/o in RI?· Do private and public insurance benefits extend to women who are incarcerated? · Women's Prison - Jennifer Clarke, MD

7. Substance abuse among teenagers

8. Homeless women Is there something HEALTH can do to better ensure access to health care for homeless women and their families?